

Examiners' report

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

IT

OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical in IT

Certificate: 05838

Extended Certificate: 05839

Introductory Diploma: 05840

Foundation Diploma: 05841

Diploma: 05842

Extended Diploma: 05877

Unit 1 Summer 2025 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Unit 1 series overview

As with the January marking session, candidates attempted most of the questions on the question paper. However also as in January, this session saw a poor level of exam technique demonstrated with candidates' responses not being clear in what they were trying to express. As a result, marks were lost by candidates due to this lack of clarity, examiners were not able to award marks with certainty. Despite this, Section B saw candidates picking up marks for knowing the content of the specification across a range of questions. Responses were credited from candidates that were beyond the scope of the unit if they were technically correct in 2025 due to the advancements of technology since the inception of the specification.

Section A was in the main answered well, although the more technical questions were not well answered.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• had a grasp of the knowledge taught in the unit, resulting in marks being consistently picked up across the question paper • related their responses to the context in Section B, in line with the vocational nature of the qualification • wrote responses that were clear and concise.	• did not know the unit content • provided sweeping generalisations as responses • wrote responses that were unclear in their structure and content • did not apply context to their answers, providing generic answers that did not meet the criteria for the question.

Section A overview

This section contains 15 multiple choice questions that do not rely on any context. These are designed to test knowledge recall. Candidates who picked up 10 or more marks in this section tended to go on pick up marks across the rest of the question paper to gain a creditable final mark.

Question 1

1 Which of the following is an output device?

- A Mouse
- B Printer
- C Processor
- D USB Port

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Question 2

2 Which type of computer system is used for large-scale data processing?

- A Desktop
- B Embedded
- C Hybrid
- D Mainframe

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Question 3

3 The number 15 is an example of which number system?

- A Binary
- B Decimal
- C Hexadecimal
- D Tetradecimal

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Question 4

4 Which of the following wireless connectivity methods requires line of sight?

- A Bluetooth
- B GSM
- C Laser
- D WiFi

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Question 5

5 Which development tool only detects and corrects errors?

- A Compiler
- B Debugger
- C IDE
- D Translator

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

Generally, this was well answered. Where candidates selected a wrong option, this was due to them not reading the question properly, missing the word 'only'.

Question 6

6 Which of the following is a **limitation** of a multiprocessor operating system?

- A Failure of one processor will not affect overall functionality
- B Increased costs as each processor requires separate resources
- C Large main memory required
- D More work can be done in less time

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This question was poorly answered with relatively few candidates gaining this mark. As mentioned in the introduction, candidates did not show a sound level of knowledge on the more technical aspects of the question paper.

Question 7

7 Complete the following sentence.

The purpose of the Simple Network Management Process (SNMP) is to

_____.

- A Define how to establish network communications
- B Manage and monitor network devices
- C Report errors to devices
- D Transmit files between computers on a network

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Question 8

8 Which of the following servers is used to store software?

A Application

B Database

C File

D Web

☐☐☐☐

[1]

Despite this not being a technical question, relatively few candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 9

9 Which of the following is **not** a benefit of hybrid virtualisation?

A Improves reliability of virtual machines

B Increased efficiency when scaling to meet requirements

C Increased flexibility of where data is stored

D Simplifies backup processes

☐☐☐☐

[1]

This question was poorly answered with relatively few candidates gaining this mark. As mentioned in the introduction, candidates did not show a sound level of knowledge on the more technical aspects of the question paper.

Question 10

10 Complete the following sentence.

The use of social media at work can cause issues for a member of staff because it can cause them to _____ .

- A** Be well motivated
- B** Complete work on time
- C** Lose concentration
- D** Problem solve easily

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This question was well answered across the whole of the cohort.

Question 11

11 Which statement best describes the use of email in business?

- A** Formal written electronic communication that can be sent to more than one person at the same time
- B** Informal written electronic communication posted for several people to read
- C** Personalised formal written communication sent to an individual
- D** Vocal communication between two people

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Question 12

12 Which physical security method can prevent unauthorised users viewing data and reduce glare?

A Anti-spyware

B Biometrics

C Privacy screen

D Radio frequency identification

☐☐☐☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Question 13

13 Which business system is used to gather information to decide who is best able to aid a caller?

A Client server

B Help desk

C Management information system

D Standard operating system

☐☐☐☐

[1]

This question saw a mixed success rate but many candidates gained the mark.

Question 14

14 Complete the following sentence.

The systematic approach to restructuring an organisation's goals, processes and technologies is called _____.

A Change management

B Code of conduct

C Disaster planning

D Scale of change

☐☐☐☐

[1]

This question saw a mixed success rate with an equal proportion of candidates gaining/not gaining this mark.

Question 15

15 Which digital security method is used to provide individuals with access rights to files?

A Biometrics

☐

B Firewalls

☐

C Permissions

☐

D Tokens

☐

[1]

This was correctly answered by most of the cohort.

Section B overview

This section was based on a scenario focusing on an IT development company developing an application. So, to gain full marks, candidates had to apply their knowledge to the context. This reflects the vocational aspect of the qualification. As a result, where candidates tended to pick up the 'knowledge' mark(s) in a question the vocational application was not awarded as often. This, along with the prevalence of generalised comments, restricted the overall marks awarded for some candidates. This ability to apply the knowledge to the context is where centres are advised to direct their attention for future sessions and future qualifications.

Question 16 (a)

16 Riley needs to upgrade the PC that they will use to work from home.

(a) Describe the purpose of a motherboard.

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..... [2]

Most candidates gained at least 1 mark on this question. Marks were lost for lack of clarity in the response, especially with the regard to the expansion of the description.

Many candidates lost marks for describing what a motherboard is not its purpose.

Question 16 (b)

(b) Identify **two** ports that Riley would need on the upgraded PC.

1

.....

2

..... [2]

Most candidates gained at least 1 mark on this question.

Question 16 (c)

Riley decides that the upgraded PC will include both an SSD and an HDD.

(c) Explain **two** differences between an SSD and an HDD.

1

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.....

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2

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.....

.....

[4]

Most candidates picked up at least 2 marks on this question. Where marks were lost, candidates were not specific in the answers. An example of this seen consistently was 'an SSD is faster'. From the question asked we could imply that an SSD is faster than HDD, however faster with regards to what could not be implied. As a result, marks could not be awarded. Candidates need to be more specific and detailed in their responses.

Question 16 (d)

(d) Identify **one** method that Riley can use to dispose of the PC's old storage components.

Explain how this method will comply with data protection legislation.

Method

Explanation

.....

.....

[3]

Candidates tended to gain at least 1 mark on this question even if they did not identify the method used within the first line of the answer. An example of this would be the response of 'deleting data' which on its own would not comply with the data protection legislation. However, by expanding the explanation with electromagnetic wiping would lead to further marks being awarded as a clear method had been identified.

Question 17 (a)

17 Riley's home is connected to the internet using copper cable.

(a) Describe **two** characteristics of copper cable that make it suitable for connecting homes to the internet.

- 1
-
-
-
- 2
-
-
-

[4]

Candidates who did well on this question were specific with the characteristics identified and the expansions provided. As with the question regarding HDD/SSD, candidates lost marks for sweeping statements with no qualification. Typical examples of these were 'it's cheaper' or 'it's cheaper than other methods'. Neither of these statements could be credited as 'it's cheaper' is not qualified against what, and it's 'cheaper than other methods' is incorrect when considering the use of Wi-Fi or mobile technologies.

Question 17 (b)

Riley is considering having fibre cable installed to their home.

(b) Explain **two** characteristics of fibre cable that would persuade Riley to have it installed.

1

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.....

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2

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[4]

Once again candidates who did well on this question were specific with the characteristics identified and the expansions provided. Candidates who lost marks did so for one of two reasons. The first is a lack of specificity in the response, i.e. 'Fibre cable is faster than copper', faster with regards to what aspect. The second is regard to the expansion in the question about the impact on Riley and why they would be persuaded to have it installed. This is a technical vocational qualification, and as such responses should be applied to the context.

Assessment for learning



Candidates need to be more specific and qualify their answers. In this case 'fibre cable has a faster data transfer rate than copper cable.'

Exemplar 1

1 Fibre cable is less prone to interference from other lines making it a lot more secure to transfer important data across.

2 Fibre Cable has a higher bandwidth so more data can be transmitted at once.

In Exemplar 1, the candidate has clearly identified two characteristics of fibre cable and for each they have provided a reason why it would be suitable for Riley to have it installed in the context of the question. It gains the 4 marks available.

Question 17 (c)

Internet data transmission is measured using the metric system based on megabits.

(c) Explain **one** difference between the metric and binary number systems.

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..... [2]

Candidates who did well on this question clearly explained one difference between the two number systems. Candidates who did not answer the question well, provided two separate differences in their answer, rather than explaining one difference.

Question 18 (a)

18 The app will be developed using freeware software.

(a) Describe **one** characteristic of freeware software.

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.....

..... [2]

Most candidates did well on this question with the most common correct answer being that the software is free to use or download. This is a very simple response but is correct.

Question 18 (b)

During development of the app, faults were found in the software.

(b) Describe **one** common fault found when software is being developed.

.....

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.....

..... [2]

This question saw a mixed range of success across the cohort. Many candidates gained 1 mark on the question, for identifying an example such as 'syntax code' or 'logic error'. Marks were lost for not expanding upon this point.

Question 18 (c)

(c) Identify **two** documents that could be used when diagnosing software faults.

- 1
-
- 2
-

[2]

This question was generally poorly answered with many candidates providing examples of software use or testing processes. This is also disappointing when the previous series in January contained a question about troubleshooting tools. Candidates had no doubt either used it in their revision or sat the exam in January.

Question 19 (a)

19 During the development of the app, two security threats were identified.

(a) Explain what **interception** is.

-
-
-
- [2]

Candidates who did well on this question, were clear about how interception of data occurs. Candidates who did not do well explained interception by using the term intercept. This does not explain what interception means, it only restates the word with no expansion.

Assessment for learning



The use of a verb to attempt to explain a noun does not in itself provide sufficient detail for credit to be given. The verb used needs to be further clarified i.e. in this context 'the catching of data in transmission'.

Question 19 (b)

(b) Explain what **eavesdropping** is.

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..... [2]

Most candidates did well on this question, with the most common response being the unauthorised listening to someone's audio conversation.

Question 19 (c)

(c) Explain how a **firewall** can protect stored data.

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..... [2]

While many candidates gained 1 mark on this question, marks were lost for not explaining clearly how the data is protected. Many candidates just described what a firewall is not explaining how the data is protected.

Question 20*

The IT development company has decided that they will promote the new device and app using social media.

20* Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using social media for promoting the new device and app.

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..... [10]

Candidates generally answered this question well describing the advantages and disadvantages of using social media. Where candidates gained the highest marks they explained in detail how a business would benefit from using social media, rather than the use of social media in general. Where candidates did not do as well they once again made general comments such as 'social media is free' rather than how its 'free to post' but not expanding this into how social media advertising can be paid for to make it more effective.

Question 21 (a)

21 Riley has several industry qualifications.

(a) Explain **one** advantage to **Riley** of having industry qualifications.

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..... [2]

Candidates who did not answer this question well just stated that Riley had industry qualifications. They did not expand on how this benefitted them.

Question 21 (b)

(b) Explain **one** advantage to the **IT development company** of Riley having industry qualifications.

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..... [2]

Candidates who did well were again those who were specific rather than general in their responses. Those that did not gain the marks needed to be more specific in their answers with respect to how the company benefited such as knowing that they were employing a qualified individual.

Question 22 (a)*

22 The IT development company is updating its working processes.

(a)* Explain why the company will require staff to use Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) when working for the company from home.

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..... [10]

This question saw a mixed range of success across the cohort, with responses not being as well constructed as the other extended response question this session. Candidates tended to be very general, once again, in their response not explaining clearly why an SOP is required. Instead, candidates tended to describe many different reasons for a SOP in general, rather than explaining in detail more than one reason for an SOP in the context of question.

Question 22 (b)

(b) Explain **two** ways in which word processing skills could be used when creating a new whistleblowing policy.

- 1
-
-
-
- 2
-
-
-

[4]

This question was poorly answered across the cohort, with candidates not clearly identifying what a word processing skill is and then expanding on that in context. Many candidates provided responses which were more in line with previous question paper questions on whistleblowing policies regarding the content of a policy. Candidates who did well on this question clearly stated a word processing skill i.e. typing, bulleted lists, use of spell checker tool and then linked it to the impact on developing the policy.

Question 22 (c)

(c) Explain **two** methods that could be used to improve the security of the IT development company's information.

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2

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[4]

This question was generally well answered, with most candidates gaining at least 1 mark on this question. However, candidates lost marks by not considering that the question refers to how the security could be improved - so responses such as 'username and password' were discounted as in the context of the question paper. The addition of 'username and password' would not be improving an existing system, it is standard practice and can be expected to be in place already by the organisation in the scenario.

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